

we can interpret the phrase by his own doctrine. Man is governed primarily by heredity and by the facts of variation. Nature has driven him harshly forward on the path towards being a more perfect creature, by the extermination of the physical and mentally less fit. Is it not the duty of man to accelerate Nature's progress? For if there be that First Cause, which gave natural laws to the universe for its development, then these indicate the purpose of its creator, and the interests as well as the duty of man are to hasten the processes of evolution. As Galton, Darwin's cousin, said, it is the *religious* duty of man to see that man is better and better born. But that is another story and is an inference, not the moral drawn by Darwin himself from his doctrine. His task lay in breaking our fetters, in producing a revolution in, or a reversal of, human thought. It is ours to enjoy the immense fields he opened to human enquiry and to study not only the bearing of his teaching on our religious beliefs, but no less its deep significance for our moral judgments. To me it seems that the day is ripe for the application of Darwin's doctrines not only to individual conduct, but to the solution of grave social and political problems."

LEONARD DARWIN.

Sadler, William S., M.D. *Race Decadence : An Examination of the Causes of Racial Degeneracy in the United States.* George Routledge, London, 1923, 10/6.

THIS book is an admirable example of a very valuable class. It is a popular book, frankly addressed to the laity by a learned man who knows how to write a popular book. Breezy and interesting in style, it contrives to impart a mass of varied and authentic information in such a manner as to keep the attention of a reasonably intelligent reader pleasantly occupied. The propagandist portions are marked by tact and firmness. The emphasis is strong; but it is obtained by the vivid and convincing presentation of facts rather than by manipulation of text or type. Nevertheless Dr. Sadler is fully alive to the propagandist value of a good title—a title which embodies the matter to be proved; and he has the national gift of forcible and picturesque diction.

Race Decadence is conceived broadly. Its causation is considered in relation to both acquired and inherited disease and abnormality; to conditions which are limited to the individual and operate only for the term of an individual life and to those other conditions that take continuous effect from generation to generation. The treatment of the former includes a considerable amount of advice as to the methods of preserving health and "postponing your funeral," of which no more need be said than that it is, of course, technically sound and is tempered by strong common sense.

The book is divided into two parts, of which the first deals with physical decadence and the second with mental degeneracy. In effect, however, the two parts deal respectively with the problem in relation to the individual and the race. There is, however, one chapter in the first part which, although unrelated to heredity, is of such sociological

interest as to call for brief notice. This is the chapter dealing with the increase in "old-age" diseases. "This latter phenomenon," Dr. Sadler observes, "a rising mortality in elderly life, is something almost peculiar to the United States. It is not exhibited in the mortality statistics of any of the leading European countries"; and he further states that "During the past thirty years, the mortality from these degenerative diseases has nearly doubled." If the distribution of these early senile changes is correctly stated, there is presented to the sociologist a most instructive commentary on the recent changes in the environment of civilized man.

The second part of the book is concerned entirely with eugenic problems and their solutions, and its title, "Mental Degeneracy, or, the Increase in Mental and Nervous Disorders," indicates the author's point of view. Dr. Sadler is a robust and whole-hearted eugenicist; but he is eminently moderate and cautious. He states his case forcibly and clearly, not even neglecting the appeal in terms of dollars to those who, as he remarks, are susceptible only to that form of argument; but he avoids exaggerated statements and lurid declamation and his views upon preventive measures are carefully considered, though not in the least ambiguous.

The chapter on the Aristocracy of the Unfit is one of the most characteristic; and its opening paragraph exhibits the author's method of stating the case for Eugenics. "We are supporting an idle population of defectives amounting to more than 1 per cent. of the total population, at an expense to the state and nation of more than \$100,000,000 a year. The names of these insane, idiots, criminals and paupers are registered in state hospitals, asylums, almshouses and prisons, together with something of their pedigrees. And with this evidence of unfitness clearly before us, we permit many of these defectives to breed more and worse lunatics, idiots, criminals and paupers."

The thesis having been thus stated, the author proceeds to produce his evidence. The numbers of the different unfit types are quoted from the official and other records, and, incidentally, it is shown that the \$100,000,000 of direct expenditure swells to \$500,000,000, when the direct expense of the unfit comes to be computed. Very striking and convincing, especially to the American reader, are the condensed histories of the degenerate families whose pedigrees have been investigated: the notorious Jukes family, 1,200 strong (each member of which was estimated by Dugdale to have cost the nation over \$1,000); the Nam family, of a similar type, the "Ishmaelites" of Indiana, the Owens of Kentucky, the "L" family of Pennsylvania (mostly non-criminal morons) and the Zero family. Of all of these the statistical particulars are given and the damage done by them, in a merely material sense, stated in dollars as nearly as can be estimated; and whether considered in terms of economics, of racial quality or of convenience or public welfare, it is difficult to imagine a more impressive demonstration to the intelligent layman than the recital of these family histories.

In regard to preventive policy, Dr. Sadler is on the side of caution and moderation. Restriction of marriage he regards with some

favour, but only in respect of disease. Eugenically, he considers that it "has signally failed as a preventive measure, for the evident reason that it only adds illegitimacy to degeneracy, and thus the children enter on life's battle doubly handicapped." On the other hand he is in favour of divorce on properly-established eugenic grounds as being "merely a cure for an improper condition." Sterilization is accepted, but without enthusiasm. "There is no doubt concerning its effectiveness," and the author "thinks that at some future time the opportunities for personal injustice may be so minimized that the operation will come into general use in the management of certain classes of clear-cut and undoubted racial degeneracy and hopeless defectiveness." Among the objections to sterilization are the possibility of its leading to "the spread of sexual immorality and venereal disease," and the fact that suitable objects for the operation "are utterly unfit to hold their own in the world, in competition with normal people." The policy which, on the whole, commends itself to him is that of the segregation of the unfit; but he clearly perceives that it has but a limited application. "The segregation of all degenerates and defectives would be an enormous and impractical task."

Here Dr. Sadler, like other eugenists, is "up against" the problem that seems to have no solution; and it is of all eugenic problems the most urgent. The lunatic, the idiot, the imbecile, the epileptic, the certifiable mental defective; all these could, at a sufficient cost of money and effort, be drawn into the net; but the "high-grade moron," the common sub-man—in short, the fool—slips easily through the meshes. And yet his existence is a greater menace to the world than that of all the others put together. His numbers are as the leaves of the forest. His influence on human affairs is the outstanding social phenomenon of our time. Of race-degeneration, of economic failure, of the unneighbourly clash of social classes and even of nations, of the declining welfare of civilized man and of the decline of civilization itself, he is the principal agent. And so far is his shadow from growing less that he promises, by reason of his excessive fertility, to form the bulk of the population in the near future. It is he who furnishes the great problem of eugenics.

But to return to our author. Such restrictive activities as are practicable are discussed fully, shrewdly and judicially. They include Education (of the public, not of the defectives), Restrictive Legislation, Segregation and Sterilization. Details are given of State experiments in the last three, and the reader is given the results to justify the conclusion arrived at. Indeed the book throughout is characterized by an abundance of detail and freedom from mere generalized statement, and is provided with three appendices in which yet further detail is given in the form of statistical and other tabulated matter. The present volume is the first of a series of four, of which the second will deal with Genetics, the third with Applied Eugenics and the fourth with American Problems, mainly sociological.

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